

For Adults: Girl Power! Keep It Going



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For Adults:

GIRL POWER! KEEP IT GOING!

The transition from childhood to adolescence is a time of special, and sometimes painful, development and change for young girls. Studies show that girls tend to lose self confidence and self worth during this pivotal age, becoming less physically active, performing less well in school, and neglecting their own interests and aspirations. It's during these years that girls become newly vulnerable to negative outside influences and to mixed messages about risky behaviors. This is a very important time for the adults in young girls' lives to give them love and support, and reassure them that they are not alone.

By helping girls develop skills and confidence, you lower their chances of becoming involved in high-risk activities that can limit their life opportunities. In this first phase of the campaign, ***Girl Power!*** will focus on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Future phases will address physical activity, nutrition, premature sexual activity, mental health and other issues.

The following are some ways to encourage ***Girl Power!*** in your daughters, granddaughters, students, sisters, and any other young girls in your life:

- ❖ Believe in girls and their abilities by praising their attempts as well as their achievements. Encourage them to express their opinions, feelings, and beliefs in positive ways rather than through getting involved in unhealthy behaviors such as drug, alcohol, tobacco use and other risky activities.
- ❖ Talk with girls and listen to them. Be open in your discussions and if you disagree with some of their ideas, talk about your concerns rather than shutting them out. By keeping an open line of communication with them you are letting them know that they can turn to you in times of trouble and need. Showing girls that you respect them as individuals and care about their views encourages them to respect themselves.
- ❖ Help girls understand that drugs are illegal, dangerous, and wrong. Always be very clear with your "no use" expectations. Let them know that by using these substances, they can not only hurt themselves now, but could also ruin their long-term chances to lead healthy, productive, and happy lives. To get the straight facts about the dangers and consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, call the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs at 1-800-879-2772.

- ❖ Help girls get the necessary tools to make good decisions and resist peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, or to participate in any other risky activities. By helping girls develop skills in communication, critical thinking, and building solid relationships, you help empower them to handle themselves in awkward and potentially dangerous situations. If you need help in doing this, you can call the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs at 1-800-879-2772 to request a free copy of *Keeping Youth Drug Free: A Guide for Parents, Grandparents, Elders, Mentors, and other Caregivers*.